



Media Release
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Belgian Antarctic Expedition 2005: Logistics Survey Expedition

The second Belgian Antarctic Research Expedition (Belare 2005) visited the base construction site in Utsteinen Nunatak to take additional topographic and ice thickness measurements and to refurbish the Automatic Weather Station (AWS).

A lot of time was spent working on the AWS and Immarsat. The Automatic Weather Station's backup system (Data Storage Unit) was supposed to have gathered data but, it turned out that the DSU did not function properly and that it had not collected one single data. For some unknown reason, the AWS data logger controller had switched from a 10 minutes transmitting interval to a 1 minute interval, generating much more transmissions than foreseen. As a result, the full battery capacity calculated for 2+ years was used in 11 months. New batteries were desperately needed.

The tentative planning foresaw a direct flight to the Utsteinen site in order to drop off the goods at the base camp area, before starting the air reconnaissance of the Breid Bay area along the coast. As planned, various areas of the coast were overflown but no landings were attempted.

To complement the original AWS setup, a second wind speed sensor was installed 4m above the ground and at 75m from the AWS itself in an area close to the building integration site. This sensor allows simultaneous wind speed measurements which are used to assess the wind-energy potential of the site and to define mechanical specifications for the building.

While Alain Hubert, leader of the expedition, took on the survey of the coast and access route to Utsteinen, the rest of the team carried on with the topographic monitoring of the building area on the ridge. A reduced area of the ridge was mapped and an intensive photo survey took place. The new ice drill, capable of drilling up to 6m in depth, was tested with the prospect of assessing the snow/ice firmness close to the ridge, where the below-surface part of the building will be built.

The first actions in the ice measurements program were also undertaken by recording the ice movement and snow accumulation/ablation on the ice stakes which were installed during the 2004 expedition. A further twenty new ice stakes were positioned on a line perpendicular to the ridge.

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BACKGROUND:



The International Polar Foundation (IPF) is an international not-for-profit organization, headquartered in Brussels (established as a "Fondation d'Utilité Publique" in Belgium in 2002, with HRH Prince Philippe as Honorary President). It also has branches in Great-Britain, France, Switzerland and the United States.

The IPF's mission is:

To communicate and educate on the reality of climate change through the findings of Polar sciences and thereby convince society to act responsibly now to ensure a sustainable world for future generations.

For more detailed information about the IPF visit www.polarfoundation.org.